The Growing Musician

A Series of seminars by the musical maestro, Michael Drake.

# Fundamentals of Musicianship

Presented by Michael Drake

**Fundamental**: *adjective* Date: 15th century

- An original or generating source**:** *A discovery* fundamental *to modern computers.*
- Belonging to one's innate or ingrained characteristics.
- Deep Rooted *fundamental* good humor.
- A foundation without which an entire system or complex would collapse.
- Indispensable, Necessary and Essential implies belonging to the very nature of a thing and therefore being incapable of removal without destroying the thing itself or its character.

*Conflict is essential in drama.* F*undamental principles of the English language*

- **Fund**

[Latin `fundus`, *bottom, piece of land*.]
A source of supply; *a stock* A sum of money or other resources set aside for a specific purpose.
**Funds -** Available money; ready cash, knowledge.
An organization established to administer and manage a sum of money and knowledge.

- **Mental**

Of or relating to the mind: *intellectual, mental powers*
Men and women are mental! Men are mental and women are womental!
When ever you see anything that says for women, it's actually saying,

*"I once knew a man named Bret,*
*Who unknowingly forgot he would forget,*
*To remember the things he needed to know,*
*So, for now he has no regrets!"*

- **-al** Suffix Middle English, from Old French, from Latin –alis, adjective.

Of or relating to or characterized by.

*Parent-parental, Pastor-pastoral, Nature-natural, Autumn-autumnal,*
*Accident-accidental, Season-seasonal, Tribe-tribal*

- **Mental-funds *and* Fun-duh-mental**

*Creative ideas come from creative people needing to create results!*

## *Pick a topic for your clinic!*

*"Smile when playing your horn, they'll hear your voice"*

- Talk slowly, think quickly.
- Make the most of your practice time.
- Day to day instrument and instrumentalist care
- Posture and playing position
- Tuning and intonation
- If you limit your experiences, you limit your successes.
- It's not that I have talent, I'm just determined not to let the lack of my talent get in my way.
- If everyone thought the same, then no-one would be thinking.
- Small minds discuss people, medium minds discuss events and great minds discuss ideas. The greatest minds have been discussed by people, created events and developed new ideas.
- The entrepreneurial spirit
- What aligns with your molecular structure?
- Recognize the qualities of your personality.
- The warmup - warm down.
  Breathing, Air compression, Hatha Yoga, Posture, embouchure.
- Creating signature riffs/melodic ideas.
- Band leader. To be or not to be.
- Find players with qualities that fill the needs and interests of everyone.
- How to coach a new player in your group: interpretation of music.
- Proper etiquette on and off stage, never telescope discomfort with other musicians.
- How to be a good sideman.
- Recording / Producing. Why, where, how and with whom. Choosing the material, The audio mix / audio arena. Pacing, packaging,
- Promotion
- Songwriting
- Developing a clientele base.
- Improvisation
- How do I get hired...What if I get fired... what if no one cares but Mom and Dad.
- I spent all this time learning my craft, why aren't people paying me the Big bucks?
- Should I care what the audience thinks? Or should I think for the audience?

# "The Player with 3 ears"

- ***1st Ear left.*** Reads the part on the spot at almost 100%. Plays in tune in relationship to everything. If an error is made reading a repeat or rhythm, the recovery is so quick, you almost don't notice it.

- ***2nd Ear right***. Listens to everyone else, and studies and learns instantaneously from their rhythmic and melodic phrasing the correct interpretation of the rhythms and melodies and then embrace and applies them appropriately.

- ***3rd Ear.*** When provided the opportunity to be creative and to do a solo, he does so in the following manner. The player of course is allowed to play his style, but always with the totality of the composition at hand, mind and heart.
  In this room, figuratively speaking, he is in charge, at the same time as before, but must consider The other musicians he performs with, and the musical input that is provided by them.

    - *Create a solo that compliments the other musician's contributions*.

He must interject melodic and rhythmic ideas that will stimulate the melodic or rhythmic interest of the other players so as to create an arena that is conducive to melodic or rhythmic tension and release.

- ***Results.*** *I will definitely hire and want to play with that person again!*

- **Avoid** tunnel vision, note by note, accept when necessary to learn everything about something.
- **Make the most** of your Face time. Practice thinking! Practice doing!
- **Your band director** must be smart enough to know his players so he can choose the tunes that:
    1. Challenge you to grow,
    2. Compliment the players,
    3. And is a nice set of music for a concert.
- **Players need to know** the other sections parts and how they relate to yours.
- In math if we knew the other guys answer that would be called cheating,
  In music, not knowing the other guy's music is self-defeating!
    - Sing your notes as a band then exchange your music with the other players and sing their parts.
- **I'd like to know how to be professional!**
  All professionals are still learning how to be professional.
- **Trying to get the younger** player to play in tune and what we call, centering the horn with your sound and tone, so that it is placed properly in the horn before it comes out the other end, is like an artist knowing where to brush and with what color. This concept for younger players is not an easy thing for them to get, much less recognize that there is a difference!
- ***Success and failure breed each other:*** Success creates failure for something else or call it space or room. Failure should be a stimulant for success, so you know what not to do.
- **Share your passion** and feel the wealth.
  Share the wealth too soon and you diminish the passion!

*Passion Comes First*

- *We are older than yesterday guys, as we look into our eyes.*
  *Today was tomorrow, no room for sorrow, it's living that makes us wise.*

- **Inspiration -** Not to get too esoteric (confined to and understandable by only an enlightened inner circle) but the origins/source of my inspiration, and not in any particular order are:

  - **The inability to truly explain how to balance on a bike!**

You must find it yourself. Close your eyes and listen to your spirit, insight, passion, heart, inspiration, experiences and thoughts of people and drive to connect melodic curiosity with the world and everyday life that surrounds you. Use the melody, as it comes to you, in varying degrees of completeness, as a story or poetic line, to reflect my many subtle layers of feelings. But at first, I feel there must be a reason to write. You must have one that moves you. You must have one that hits you when you are ready for it and then recognize it. In one of my poems, I write:

***"I'm thinking thoughts that come back to see, if they really want to be thought by me.***
***When they return, I'll treat them well, we'll have a chance to show and tell".***

- Melody comes when you least expect it and that is the engine that pulls the Cole Train, pun intended. But it must be you and it must be real. It should never ever be an exercise in writing, because if it is, then that song will always be just that, an exercise.
- Sometimes the melody comes to me and that inspires the title or sometimes a subject matter/title comes to me and that inspires the melody or they arrive at the same time.

At times it is just one of those melodic fragments that went flying by in my brain and I grabbed on to it. It took me for a ride or where it was supposed to go.

**Musical adjectives**.

Bottom line is melody reflects my life and has been with me for as long as I can remember, even before I learned how to ride a bike. NOW to finally answer your question.
"Where did I draw the inspiration from?

- **The titles *can*** reflect the moment of inspiration**.**
- **Many times,** people are interested in how long it takes to create one of my projects.
  My answer is: *"Whatever age I am at the time is how long it took."*
  - **I've been** a verbal and musical lyricist my entire life. The way each ingredient of that language relates and reacts to the other ingredients, as in the countless different melodies and rhythms used over chord changes, or the variety and amounts of seasonings that can be used to spice up chicken, is what makes it unique!
- **Creativity** is always just around the corner.
- Faith in yourself is the ability not to panic.
- If you worry, you don't do your homework. If you have done your homework, don't worry.
- Be flexible, and you won't get out of shape.
- If you get tangled up like a knot in ideas, be still and listen to one at a time. Listening to your heart and spirit will untangle the knot.
- You're looking for spiritual fruit, not hard nuts.
- If you have a problem, it's you.
- Silence is often misinterpreted but never misquoted.

- Laugh everyday – it's like inner jogging.
- Growing old is inevitable, growing up is optional.
- There is no key to success and happiness, the door is always open.
- Nothing is real until you experience it, otherwise it's just hearsay.
- Living life successfully requires courage.
- The goals and dreams you seek require courage and risk taking.
- Learn from the turtle, it only makes progress when it sticks its neck out.
- Character trumps reputation. Character is what and who you are, reputation is what others think you are.
- Leave gentle fingerprints on the soul of another for the angels to read.
- I don't want to just live the length of my life; I want to live the width as well.
- **Ego** is the result of the *perception* and *deception* of talent and good quality hard, productive work! In your case, no perception, no deception, all reality! No ego!

- No, I didn't study philosophy. If I did, I probably wouldn't have been creative.

- ***The Piano Tuner*** Oh yes, oh yes said the man with no ears, to the ears attached to the man who aligns the vibrating strings of an instrument that truly surpasses the audio experiences of most living creatures who explore the inner and outer edges of life's journeys with the kid wonder of, yes you guessed it, you, the kid of tonal molecular structure ! ! ! In other words?????

- ***I'm frustrated that*** I don't have my own voice and expression on an instrument yet".
  **Answer:** I would have to disagree. From this side of the street, you have plenty going on. It is typical, however, to question and have doubts about your own expressive capabilities.
  That is simply a sign of your need for more growth. Just think back to day one of music when you had desire and love for the smallest of ideas and as time went on you realized how little you knew. The more you learn the more you learn how little you know. That old line but how true it is**.** Our impatient lifestyle brings things out like that, but that is all good as long as you react to it in a productive manner to achieve results from the static energy that one gets from frustration. I have plenty of those. If you limit your experiences, you limit your successes. Don't ever be afraid of where you are, just look back to where you were.
  ***"I get frustrated at times that it feels*** like I don't have enough range, sustain, pitch bending capability, "overblown", or other abilities on my instrument that are very helpful when trying to express yourself." These things sort of make me want to play other instruments, like keyboard or horn, etc."
  **Answer:** I wish I could play multiple notes on the horn and spell out changes and not have to use one note at a time to do that and I wish I did not have to breath as often as I do so as to play longer lines that I hear but I have to breath and create a phrase line based on air and not on musical interest and I wish that it was easier to play high notes all night long, and I wish the horn would play perfectly in tune without me having to constantly adjust, and I wish I didn't have to clean all the built up scum left over in the horn like bacon and eggs so as to keep the natural resonance consistent from week to week and I wish I didn't have to keep the sweat from my hands from coating the horn and deadening the sound and I wish I didn't have to oil my

- valves and take the dents out that. We all have our limitations. I must admit I do love being able to bend a note for the sake of emotion and I do love having a large dynamic range. But that is the way it is and if you need another outlet to express yourself, have at it. I love recording and producing layers of sound that compliment each other. That in part satisfies my multi note play inabilities.

- ***It's sometimes very difficult*** to decide where I should put my time in cultivating a musical voice.
  **Answer:** A musical voice needs to be looked at as a multitude of many layers of musical voices. Let your heart beat your feet to get it done. The beat in your heart is the step in your feet.
  ***What's*** fame? A fancied life in other's breath. A thing beyond us, even before our death.

***Some people use*** one half their ingenuity to get into debt; all others avoid paying it.
***To him, who is determined*** it remains only to act.
***One belongs to New*** York instantly. One belongs to it as much in five minutes as in five years.
***The magic of the pen*** lies in the concentration of your thoughts upon one object.
***To vice, innocence*** must always seem only a superior kind of chicanery.
***Revolve your world around*** the customer and more customers will revolve around you.
Appearance rules the world.
***Behavior is what*** a man does, not what he thinks, feels, or believes
***Attitude is your acceptance*** of the natural laws, or your rejection of the natural laws.
***History is more or less*** bunk. Pin your faith to no one's sleeves, haven't you two eyes of your own.
***Nothing is more sacred*** than the integrity of your own mind.

**The effort..... Financially and emotionally exhausting.**

**The rewards.....Emotionally and intellectually exhilarating.**

**The results.....I wouldn't change a thing. Michael**

***Your handy way with words*** I admire, it's the tilt of your talent I do aspire.
The ease of your read is to those you feed the content and clarity that leaves no need,
for further descriptions or in depth depictions, your joining of letters has no restrictions.
***My mind is a blank*** page at times, which is good, it allows new stuff to walk right in and then pass right through or hangs around a while if I choose till I need it.
***Lessons learned are those*** best earned by doing wrong and listening well,
With this, my first Lollipop in hand, I think that you can tell,
I choose to listen to learn the lesson to earn it the easy way,
and when this one's gone, I'll see if Grams has another for me today!
***What qualifications do*** you have to make decisions.
**P r o j e c t  B o a r d**

***Is your*** life just what YOU want to do? Think again…..
***Go iron your shirt*** and straighten out your brain while you're at it.
***Action is power,*** we gain clarity from our working hard and habits are what make us.
***We should be striving*** to develop" mental protein not "mental candy".
***I'm happy because*** I sing" and "I sing because I'm Happy."
***If you argue for your limitations***, that's what you'll get." and of our "society wanting a quick fix" with things, "stressed the importance of a belief system in what you do and why you do it...and the value in doing it."
**"We learn from** the successes and failures of those who came before us" and "self-discipline is doing what you know you should do--even when you don't want to."
***Keeping a journal where you can*** learn from those successes and failures and the beauty and value of learning from the master's before us who have written testimony of what came before them!
***Repetition is the MOTHER*** of skill" and that we are in control of our actions, and that discipline will bring positives. Most people take two steps forward and one back as they're working, but most people STOP when they take that step back. Be tenacious, see setbacks as part of the plot, and it is best that you don't stop or give up-- even if success seems slow.
***We are all forever students*** in life and can and SHOULD continue to learn and grow.
**The last thing anyone** needs is a false sense of security of where you are in your career. It's sort of like if I give you all the answers to the test and all you must do is memorize those, the results are a false sense of security and worth of total knowledge of the subject. They wind up studying for a narrowed body of material/questions for the test and not include the overall super view concept, which is what we do when we drive a car. Imagine this test: Learn how to turn left, right, start and stop but don't worry about what happens in between! The old joke at the end of the night, I like to tell everyone "Make sure you ***don't*** go straight home……Turn at the corners!"
**The basic premise** that an educated, en-lighted decision should always trump, hold more merit and relevance in every one's eye then the opposite, is not true. An honest recommendation concerning any particular product based on personal preference reflects the opinions of the recommender.

Recommending someone to listen, taste, try something because you might like it, is light years away from asking someone to say this is the best blindly. Let quality after evaluation of all others trump just being a friend and let content be the deciding factor.
**Do not diminish** the earned security and confidence of someone else.
**To like something** for any reason other than the truly comparative content is doing a dis-service to all. One should not make up their minds because they might just know them or someone else says this is the guy.
***May all jazz musicians*** remind us of the latest interesting and timely promise we should have made to ourselves. That would be to continue to play real changes that arrive at different times and give us what we didn't know was going to be there, making sure not to be the last ones arriving!
Michael
***You make music right where you*** are; and that's the best place to make it. You give the people around you the opportunity to enjoy your art. You don't have to travel too far to make people happy and make a good living with your talent.
**Getting testimonials and reviews**

***Key to Longevity*** get hooked, passion I think he's doing what he loves. I like the language. I like the culture. The faucet was open and it just ran out; personality contributes to success. Very professional. hard worker who's always busy with something or other. The motor never stops. Do things that keep your creative energies flowing. It's hard for me to sit still, eager to please local crowds, prolific in the studio as you should be with genres.

***"If you limit your experiences,*** you limit your successes"

***"It's not that I have talent*** I'm just determined….
not to let the lack of my talent get in my way"

***"If everyone thought the*** same, then no-one would be thinking"

***Small Minds Discuss People, Medium*** minds discuss events, Great minds discuss Ideas,
The greatest minds have been discussed by people, created events and developed new ideas.

**Your Image**

## Branding Your Band

Being in a successful band is no different than running your own business. Branding is equally important with your band, as it is for a business like Starbucks.
Branding for a band or artist is creating a perception/image that identifies you and separates you from the countless other bands.
Adding Professionalism
Branding will help give you that professionalism that you find with bands on major labels. You want people to think "What label are these guys on?" not "Aren't these guys local."
Branding will tie your band's image together with your sound and help target your demographics. If you're a pop punk band you don't want to look like a death metal band. If you're an alt country band you don't want to look like a hip hop group. Your image should fit your sound, look and demographics.

## Your Graphics

Branding will further reinforce the idea that you're ready for the big time with your art and graphics used. Just like your personal appearance your graphics used should reflect the mood and feel of the band. Use the same graphic designer for all your work. Keep the font & logo the same on all your band's marketing materials (website, flyers, buttons etc)

Here is a good example of branding in music
Website www.hellogoodbye.net
Myspace www.myspace.com/hellogoodbye
The band does the whole emo pop punk music. Their demographics are definitely tweens and teens who have had a few runs on TRL. They have a Napoleon Dynamite feel to their image. Short shorts, shirts you might find at a thrift store or a summer camp etc.
Promo shots (theme is young, goofing off, high school)
The band uses the same logo and color scheme for both their myspace and website.
Logo is even used on some of their merchandise.
Video for their song "Here In Your Arms" ties everything together
The video has a Napoleon Dynamite theme, Summer Camp, Teens.
Again, targeting their demographics and overall image. Your band might not be pop punk, might have entirely different demographics but branding will still be important. So, make sure you identify your demographics, tighten your image and pull everything into one cohesive brand.

1. The entrepreneurial spirit
2. What aligns with your molecular structure?
3. Recognize the qualities of your personality.
4. The warmup - warm down. Fundamentals.
   Breathing, Air compression, Hatha Yoga, Posture, embouchure.
5. Creating signature riffs/melodic ideas.
6. Band leader. To be or not to be.
7. Find players with qualities that fill the needs and interests of everyone.

a. How to coach a new player in your group: interpretation of music, proper etiquette on and off stage, never telescope discomfort with other musicians.

8. Etiquette on and off stage, never telescope discomfort with other musicians.
9. How to be a good sideman.
10. Recording / Producing. Why, where, how and with whom. Choosing the material, The mix / audio arena. Pacing, packaging,
11. Promotion
12. Songwriting
13. Developing a clientele base.
14. Improvisation
15. How do I get hired...What if I get fired... what if no one cares but Mom and Dad.
16. I spent all this time learning my craft, why aren't people paying me the Big Bucks?
17. Should I care what the audience thinks? Or should I think for the audience?

- "How did you do it?
- The process of what it takes to do what you have to do to get done what you want to get done if getting done is on your mind.
- Educational seminars.

The plan is for me to reach some kids and parents with these sessions; the store can perhaps sell some product related to some of the topics and I hopefully can sell some CDs Etc. So, it will be sort of like a "Tip Jar Gig".

*Everyone has a one-way ticket to a two-way street….*

- Music teachers can never underestimate the value of what they can do for the students. Attitude is everything.

- It is up to the teachers to make sure the kids are thinking.

- The warmup - warm down. Three 2-hour practice sessions per day.
  Soft low playing – focus on fundamentals.
  Breathing – Air compression. Head stands in Yoga position, breathe thru the nose exhale thru the mouth. Breath attacks -Face muscles - compared to ligature on reed instruments.

Posture – play in every position imaginable.
Project - Introspect

1. I want to record a CD. Where, why and with whom do I start.
2. Multi-tracking, how much time should I spend on the mix? Primary, secondary motives and beyond considering the multitude of placement of motives in the audio arena from panning info hard left to hard right as well as in the front of the mix to the back of the mix and every spot in-between.
3. Cost, choosing the material,
4. Pacing of the project,
5. Cover art, what studio should I choose.
6. Guidelines in the decision making process.
7. How do I get gigs? How do I develop a clientele base who would be interested in the music and more importantly hire me again and get references.
8. I want to be discovered?
9. I want to be rich?
10. I want to be like_____. Really?
11. My approach to improvisation – 100 steps and still searching.
12. Melodies, Verse and Chorus. Why.
13. Cataloging all your materials.
14. Writing songs and the origins.
15. Evolution of recording techniques since 1980.
16. What should a musician do now that he/she thinks he/she has all the hot licks.
17. How do I get hired...What if I get fired... what if no-one cares but Mom and Dad.

18. Just because I spent all this time learning my craft why aren't people paying me the big bucks, I deserve it.
19. Jazz and entertainment.
20. Should I care what the audience thinks? Or should I do all the thinking for the audience?
21. Promotion....What does that have to do with Jazz?
22. Do you recognize in yourself the qualities of your personality? Characterize and live it through your music.
23. Choose types of melodies/changes that align with your molecular structure.
24. More you learn the more you learn how little you know.
AND BEYOND!

***"VIDIOT" the way someone looks*** when they play too many video games. Many of today's musicians have this blank look on their face.

A major problem with the musicians today, as we had discussed at length, is that most of the kids today have never been in any kind of band other than school. When we grew up, we were in bands learning what it took to play before we had the school band experience.

Another point, some top profs at North Texas school of music have decided not to teach because a lot of the new students entering this field had no street experience and expected to be taught from the beginning how to even be a musician.

The school band programs are important but if an educator goes from school to school for his education and never tries to make a living playing, recording and creating a venue that allows him to discover who he is musically with the entrepreneurial spirit that is required for true success and continued searching, hunger and yearning for passion, he assuredly needs to at least stress the reality that the experience at this level is narrow at best. OOOOPS...Too deep you get the drift.

***"I Live my attitude***" – Michael Drake

"People might have you pigeonholed as a what ever. Be irrepressible in person as well as onstage. Put a premium on keeping the mood upbeat and happy.

Don't mind pigeonholes, remember it's a wonderful journey for you!

If you have a genuine reverence for classical music, jazz and all others will follow suit.

Let people like you as a person, then they'll listen to your music and then you can sneak in a few jazz riffs.

Start by playing the tune everyone wants to hear, then play the tune you want everyone to know.

It's always going to be a juggling act executed by you, do it with professional aplomb. Leavening your need to be embraced by enthusiastic audiences can earn you a busy schedule of performances. Retain your dedication to the craft of your choosing and have an honest desire to pass your enthusiasm and skill on to new generations.

Ever since DJs came along, they have filled in where bands used to be. But without live music, you leave out the ingredient of entertainment. I see a difference in the way people react to live music. People don't necessarily react to entertainment. They don't understand what entertainment is about anymore.

To be contagious in your good spirits is a good thing. You must be honing your craft with a prodigious work ethic before stepping into center stage.